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ABSTRACT

Historical background data and recent research on the distribution and representation of black school administrators (especially superintendents and principals) reveal significant trends. Recent trends show blacks are usually appointed to administrative positions in large urban schools with large minority populations and severe problems. Moreover, white administrators do not actively recruit minorities despite minority underrepresentation in administration. Black school administrators encounter various problems: (1) dwindling job opportunities and federal funds; (2) a scarcity of role models and mentors; (3) negative responses from subordinates; (4) conflicting expectations about black administrators' loyalties; (5) misunderstanding of the dynamics of educational administration; (6) widespread resistance to the employment of minorities; and (7) unreasonable expectations that black administrators can quickly solve difficult economic, social, and racial problems. Black school administrators need the support of mentors, friends, and families; training that provides understanding of institutional barriers and dynamics; support from educational organizations against recent attempts to curb affirmative action enforcement; an end to racially discriminatory certification programs; the adoption of active minority recruitment policies; recruitment and support of minority graduate students in educational management studies; and programs to assist in the hiring and promotion of black administrators. Tables provide distribution and representation statistics. (PB)

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BLACK SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:

A Review of Their Early History, Trends in Recruitment, Problems and Needs

Office of Minority Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

"O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this homeland of the free.)"
Langston Hughes

A black American born in 1902, Langston Hughes focused on the themes of the common man and the Negro American in his poetry, writing on their pleasures, sorrows, and dreams. He depicted the plight of the Negroes in the early 20th century, a time of bitterness and frustration for Negroes who suffered the brunt of unemployment and poverty.

Today, decades later, the same lament may be repeated, as black Americans suffer most from unemployment and lack of opportunity in most aspects of American life. This paper examines the opportunities for blacks in school administration from the early stages of the nation's history to the present.

SOME NOTES ON BLACK EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

There is very little that can be found in the recorded history of blacks in school administration before the second half of this century. Of course, blacks have been deprived of educational opportunities during the early part of the nation's history, and their schooling comprised mainly of learning how to read and write during the evening hours and after the day's toil. There were few Negroes before the Civil War who were free to go to school, but those who did went to Oberlin, Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, and other institutions of higher education.

After the Civil war, blacks in the south operated clandestine schools. These schools consisted mainly of one or two-room school houses with one teacher. Negro schools opened because of the white men's refusal to permit persons of African descent to attend white schools.

The first black school administrators mentioned in history who were the equivalent of our school administrators today were those in the Quaker-sponsored institutions. Black principals managed the Quaker-sponsored Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia from 1802 to 1903. Black administrators and faculty also wielded influence in determining the educational objectives and practices of Quaker-sponsored black institutions during the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries.

The next wave of black school administrators were the Jeanes supervisors. At the turn of the 20th century, Quaker Anna T. Jeanes began a movement directed toward maintaining and assisting rural, community, and county schools for southern Negroes with a one million dollar endowment. The Jeanes supervisors, 80 percent of whom were black women, concentrated their early work on bringing the school and community together and raising the general

standard of living. Later, they trained teachers, assisting with curriculum development, demonstrating new teaching methods and conducting in-service education designed to disseminate recent findings on child growth and development. Still later they focused on efficient school management and rapid dissemination of current information. They became increasingly recognized as professional leaders with professional degrees, and as members and active participants in learned societies and national professional organizations. They used their experience to develop and disseminate supervisory strategies for black schools and often coordinated their work with the educational leaders in colleges and universities (Haven, Adkinson, and Bagley, 1980).

One of the early black school administrators mentioned in history was Fanny Jackson Coppin, who served as principal of the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia from 1865 to 1902, and who saved that institution from near failure.

Virginia Randolph, another black woman, was a teacher in a one room school when she was appointed a Jeanes supervisor of the schools in Henrico County, Virginia in 1908. In fact the Jeanes movement started with her appointment.

Black principals heading black schools comprised another group of black school administrators. The principalship began with a head teacher's position in schools with two or more teachers. With rising student populations and the growth of building sizes, grade levels were developed and a teacher assigned to each grade. Principals became managers who met the planning, scheduling, coordinating, and supervisory needs of the schools. With the advent of more principals, however, the school system became bureaucratized, contributing to the demise of the Jeanes program.

TRENDS IN RECRUITMENT,

SELECTION AND RETENTION

No national surveys on the representation of black school administrators were conducted before the 1960s. There has also been no record of Blacks in school administrative positions higher than principal or supervisor, i.e. superintendent, during the first half of this decade. However, there were Blacks noted for their contributions to the field of education, and who had influence on Negro education.

John Hope, who began his career as an instructor in classics in 1887 at what was then the Atlanta Baptist Institute, became its first Negro president after it was renamed Morehouse College. He was a strong proponent of a liberal arts education, was instrumental in uniting three colleges into what became the highly successful Atlanta University system.

Carter G. Woodson was a historian who has been called the father of Negro history, yet was also influential in the field of education. He had a long career in teaching and writing and received a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1912. One of his books, The Negro in Our History, published in 1922, was the first textbook of its kind and proved valuable later as U.S. schools began to develop black studies programs.

Daniel A. Payne, a religious leader and educator, exerted a powerful influence over black affairs both before and after the Civil War. He became the country's first Negro college president when he assumed the leadership of Wilberforce University in Ohio. As president for 13 years, he guided the education of hundreds of future black leaders.

Another black who wielded great influence on Negro education in the years following reconstruction was Booker T. Washington. He was born a slave in Virginia in 1856, and taught himself to read by using a spelling book. He founded the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1881.

There were also outstanding black women. Among them was Mary McLeod Bethune, who founded the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School in 1904. This later became the Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune also founded the National Council of Negro Women.

There was Lucy C. Lanley, an outstanding educator who founded the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia. The institution began as a secondary school with a large elementary enrollment, and in 1930 it became a junior college.

Fanny Jackson Coppin, mentioned earlier as principal of the Philadelphia Institute for Colored Youth, was also an outstanding educator, lecturer and writer. She was the first black woman to graduate from Oberlin College in 1865.

There were many more noted black women educators during the late 19th and early 20th century: Mattie Booth, Cornelia Bowen, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and others, whose accomplishments cannot all be mentioned here.

Blacks in School Administration

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was the first agency to start collecting information on a national scale on the racial/ethnic background of school administrators. Its first survey was conducted in 1974, where it obtained data from almost 7,000 school districts around the country. Table 1 presents the results of four EEOC surveys on the racial/ethnic distribution of supervisory and administrative staff in sample districts from 1974 to 1979. The 1981-82 data were based on a recent survey by the American Association of School Administrators' Project AWARE (see Jones and Montenegro, 1982).

The EEOC surveys showed that in 1974 and 1975, blacks in school administrative and supervisory positions comprised 5.5 percent of the total. In 1978, the group's representation rose to 6.4 percent, and in 1979 it was 6.3 percent. In the 1981-82 AASA survey, black representation was significantly higher at 8.7 percent. (See Table 1).

Surveys of the racial ethnic background of principals, like those of supervisory and administrative staff, were also first conducted by EEOC in 1974. Data in Table 2 show the results of the EEOC surveys of 1974, 1975, 1978, and 1979; and that of an AASA survey in 1981-82. They indicate that there has been a slight but steady increase in the percentage of black principals in the years between 1974 to 1979 (7.7 percent in 1974, 8.0 percent in 1975, 8.3 percent in 1978, and 8.7 percent in 1979). However, black representation in the principalship declined in the 1981-82 AASA survey to the level of 1974, at 7.7 percent. This latter result is alarming, considering that black representation, currently estimated at 12 percent, is growing.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Distribution in Supervisory or Administrative Positions (1974-82)

Survey Date	Source	Racial/Ethnic Background: White	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Sample Size
1981-82	AASA-AWARE (1982)	87.1	0.3	0.8	8.7	3.0	853085
1979	EEOC (1970)	90.6	0.56	0.3	6.3	2.3	44944 (6816 districts & 64, 253 schools)
1978	EEOC (1978)	90.6	0.46	0.3	6.4	2.3	42850 (7984 districts & 64863 schools)
1975	EEOC (1975)	92.2	0.4	0.2	5.5	1.8	43208 (7248 districts & 69439 schools)
1974	EEOC (1974)	92.6	0.4	0.1	5.5	1.3	38990 (6948 districts)

[5]Sample size does not include those classified as "other." Sample is from 24 states and the District of Columbia.

[6]Includes Alaskan natives

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Representation in the Principalship (1974-82)

Survey Date	Source	Racial/Ethnic Background					
		White	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Sample Size
1981-82	AASA-AWARE (1982)	87.5	0.4	0.6	7.7	3.4	43008 (28 states and D.C.)
1979	EEOC (1970)	89.0	0.4	0.3	8.7	1.7	67262 (6816 districts & 64, 253 schools)
1978	EEOC (1978)	89.2	0.4	0.2	8.3	1.7	66530 (7984 districts & 64863 schools)
1975	EEOC (1975)	90.2	0.3	0.1	8.0	1.3	72285 (7248 districts & 69439 schools)
1974	EEOC (1974)	90.7	0.3	0.1	7.7	1.1	70455 (6948 districts)

The representation of Black administrators before the EEOC surveys could not be ascertained, but researchers have asserted that after the disappearance of the Jeanes supervisors, and when the states consolidated schools to integrate minority and nonminority students, Black principals' numbers declined. This was during the period between the 1950's and the decade of the seventies. Black principals were said to have been displaced, demoted, or given new positions with limited decision making power in "special" projects in the area or central office.

These assertions were documented in surveys in various states. Abney (1974) in a survey of black principals in Florida, saw a decline between 1964 and 1975, while the Black population in the state has risen. Coursen (1975) also reported reductions among black principals in the following states:

- Alabama - from 134 minority principals in secondary schools in 1964, to 14 in 1970.
- Delaware - from 50 black principals in 1964 to 16 in 1970.
- Kentucky - from 350 black principals in 1954 to 36 in 1970.
- Texas - a decrease of 600 in the number of black principals was noted from 1964 through 1970.
- Virginia - from 107 black principals in 1964 to 16 in 1970.

One commonality in the above reductions is that all the states surveyed were in the south. Colquitt, on the other hand, obtained different results in his 1975 study of five metropolitan school systems north of the Mason-Dixon line. Just as the southern states lost black principals in consolidated schools, the large urban school systems in the north showed increases of black principals with the growing number of black students in these systems.

In Philadelphia, a 1963 survey showed that the enrollment was 50 percent black while only 18 of the 245 principals (7.0 percent) were black. In 1972,

there were 61.5 percent black students enrolled in the schools while 53.7 percent of the principalships were held by blacks.

In Detroit, the percentage of black principals increased from five percent in 1965 to 16 percent in 1972. In Newark, New Jersey, there were no black principals in 1967, and only one was reported in 1968 in this entire school system with a 78 percent non-white population. But in 1971 the situation changed. By then 20 black principals have been appointed in Newark.

Increases in the numbers of black principals were also noted in the Chicago and New York City schools, but it was noted that their numbers are increasing so slowly that it has little meaning.

Blacks in the Superintendency

The first black superintendents (one woman and one man) were believed to have been appointed in 1956. The National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE) identified four blacks as forerunners of current black superintendents: Lillard Ashley of Boley, Oklahoma (1956), Lorenzo R. Smith of Hopkins Park, Illinois (1956), E.W. Warrior of Taft, Oklahoma (1958), and Arthur Shropshire of Kinloch, Missouri (1963). A study conducted in 1961 yielded five black superintendents in charge of rural, all-black districts in Arkansas. These districts had approximately 350 students each, the state minimum. Although the chief administrator was called "superintendent," he was more of a supervising principal. The only other black superintendent outside the South was in Lincoln Heights, Ohio, where 98 percent of the 8,000 students were black.

In 1969, when the Rockefeller Foundation first began its leadership training program to increase the number of minority administrators, they identified only 17 black superintendents nationwide (Education Week, 1982).

Not one among them was in a city school district despite the large concentration of blacks in these districts.

Charles Moody identified 21 school systems headed by black superintendents in 1970 in connection with a study he conducted at Northwestern University for his doctoral dissertation. In 1974, 44 black superintendents were reported by Scott (1980). In a 1981-82 survey of the American Association of School Administrators, 28 states and the District of Columbia provided data on the ethnic/racial background of its superintendents. Of the 7,782 school systems reported in the survey, 55 were headed by Blacks, or 0.7 percent of the total. The most recent count of Black school superintendents point to approximately 100 nationwide, out of a total of approximately 15,000 school systems.

As with black principals, it is interesting to note that black school superintendents have lately also been appointed to head large urban school systems with large minority populations. It has been argued, however, that the subsequent increases in the representation of black school superintendents will be more a result of the need for appointing them in large urban school systems (with large minority populations and difficult problems, and which non-minority superintendents generally do not want), rather than as a result of a sincere effort to recruit more black superintendents to head school systems around the country (Scott, 1980).

Several trends were noted by researchers in the recruitment and selection of Black administrators:

1. The larger the minority student population of a school system, the more minority administrators are appointed. This is especially true in large cities like Chicago, Atlanta, New York, Baltimore, etc.

2. The tenures of black school administrators, especially black superintendents, tend to be of short duration because they are mostly in urban districts with problems so severe they "can be solved only by miracles." Blacks must be able to solve financial problems, quell personnel and/or student revolt, restore discipline, raise academic achievement, unite the community and literally be able to "walk on water." These administrators are very busy responding to crises, much more attend to critical problems. (Townsel, 1975).

3. Despite the underrepresentation of minorities in school administration, a large percentage of male superintendents still do not actively recruit minorities. A recent survey by faculty and students at Ohio State University found that 45 percent of the male superintendents, mostly white males, do not actively recruit minorities. In fact, the survey results reflect a trend which moves away from equity concerns. Social and cultural issues, such as race relations, are not in the present agenda of challenges superintendents consider most important, while these issues were in the previous decade's top of the list.

The study further reports that these results may be influenced by the relaxation of federal enforcement and lesser commitment to equity areas. The "data might indicate how...the relaxation of federal commitment to rights can rapidly manifest itself in the behaviors of local school officials."

In sum, it seems that black administrators did not benefit as much from affirmative action as other groups in education. Black academicians were reported to have better employment opportunities through affirmative action programs (Freeman, 1977). Black male faculty received more job offers and higher salaries, and black superintendents who left their school districts in the late seventies became professors in universities.

PROBLEMS FACED BY BLACK ADMINISTRATORS

The following problems have been identified by those who have studied the plight of black school administrators.

1. Lack of opportunities for advancement and previous discouraging experience in the job market, which many times depress aspirations for administrative careers. Declining enrollments and district consolidation have excacerbated the lack of opportunities. This is compounded by the loss of school administrator jobs which are tied to federal funds.

2. Black school administrators find few role models and mentors, important factors in career advancement.

3. Minority administrators encounter negative subordinate response to their effectiveness. Resistance may be subconscious and reveal itself in subtle, destructive ways. Mayhand and Grusky (1972) supported the validity of this problem in an experiment they conducted on the effects of black supervision on white and black workers.

4. Barriers peculiar to minorities which seem to arise from confused role expectations. For example, such questions have been asked: "Is the minority principal a spokesperson for the minority community, a punitive disciplinarian, or a defender of minority causes?" Varying expectations can affect minority principals' relationships with their faculty and staff, students and community, and the local school board.

5. Many black school administrator candidates do not know the subtle institutional dynamics of their school systems, an ingredient in career advancement. This is because to understand and be included in these subtle dynamics requires intensive involvement, and since minorities traditionally have had limited participation in educational administration, most have been

denied both a chance to learn these dynamics and a way to become involved in them. Many minorities are often unaware of the barriers in their career paths that limit their ascent in the educational hierarchy (Lovelady-Dawson, 1981). It has been further reported that the "good ole boy" network excludes minorities and women from promotions because they deviate from white male norms, reducing promotion to a matter of cultural similarity rather than competence. Minorities who do succeed in breaking into the old boy network are often acculturated rather than included on the basis of the cultural diversity they bring with them. In a 1977 survey by Scruggs, he found that 57 percent in a sample of principals and supervisors in 11 states and Washington, D.C. answered "moderately" when asked: "Are Black administrators accepted as equals in your operation?"

6. Aspiring black school administrators still face conscious or unconscious resistance from within the educational system in obtaining employment. Doughty (1977, 1980) studied minority administrators' employment patterns and asserted that Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs designed to aid minority access to employment do not provide an edge for minority candidates. Although EEO programs may provide minorities a better chance for an interview, their applications were often screened out and used only as evidence of an attempt to meet federal requirements.

7. People respond to a black superintendent differently because of his/her color. A black superintendent is expected to solve immediately problems that stem from decades of economic, social, and racial injustice. Additionally, there is the persisting "test of fire" quality of interaction with black peers, staff, and students. Many can not seem to be satisfied unless there is a constant confrontation with the superintendent, wherein he/she has to pass or fail (Scott, 1980). Blacks need to first pass the tests before they can be regarded as professionals.

NEEDS OF BLACK SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

To assist black school administrators in maintaining effectiveness in their positions, and to achieve career growth, various needs peculiar to their group should be met.

1. Because of their limited representation in school administration today, they need support to maintain their aspirations. Often, however, they receive less. They need support from mentors and coaches, an old boy network similar to that of non-minority school administrators, encouragement from families, peers and supervisors.

2. Training should be provided for aspiring black school administrators in various aspects: the barriers they encounter, the strategies available to them to overcome these barriers, the institutional dynamics of school systems, in addition to their training on principles of school administration.

3. With the present administration's attempts to curb affirmative action enforcement, decisive actions need to be taken. Educational organizations, individuals, and groups should make known the need to strengthen rather than weaken the affirmative action and EEO policies and programs which despite their weaknesses, have been a source of hope for blacks and other minorities.

4. State certification programs should be examined with regard to their fairness to minorities and steps taken for corrective action. New York City's schools chancellor, for example, has recently filed a federal suit charging that recent city tests for high school and junior high school principals were racially discriminatory. The New York Association of Black Educators also cited the test results as an example of the blatant discrimination against minorities by the examination process. There were no blacks or hispanics among the 55 candidates who passed the most recent High School Principals Examination in New York City (Education Daily, 1981; Education Summary, 1981).

5. School systems should adopt an active recruiting policy with regard to minority administrators. They should adhere to an affirmative action plan with firm goals for correcting inequities in hiring, pay, and conditions, and publicize the district's progress.

6. Minorities in graduate schools should be encouraged and recruited for studies in educational administration, providing them with financial assistance, career counseling, and introduction to professional networks.

7. Educational organizations should develop programs to assist the hiring and promotion of black school administrators. These organizations are in a favorable position to conduct training, establish clearinghouses of information and names of qualified minority applicants, adopt resolutions, and urge their constituencies to make the hiring of minority administrators a definite priority.

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